

and second sidewalls, said coupling further including clamp means for automatically clamping an attachment end when in said predetermined alignment;

¶ said alignment means including first and second outer walls and first and second inner walls spaced from said first and second outer walls, respectively, by a distance to define first and second pockets, respectively, sized to receive said first and second sidewalls, respectively, of said elements, said inner and outer walls disposed for said elements to be in said predetermined alignment when said sidewalls are disposed between said outer and inner walls of said coupling; and

¶ said clamp means includes first and second resiliently biased spring means carried on said coupling and disposed within said first and second pockets, respectively, and directed to urge an element wall against a wall of said coupling upon insertion of said element wall between said outer and inner walls, said inner walls sized to cover said clamp means and shield said clamp means from said coupling pathway with said first and second inner walls cooperating with said element wall to define a generally continuous closed wall between said pathway-defining elements.

58. (Three Times Amended) A cable routing system comprising:

a plurality of cable pathway-defining elements; each one of said plurality terminating at least one attachment end;

a coupling for joining at least a first one of said attachment ends to at least a second one of said attachment ends, said coupling including aligning means for aligning the first and second ones in a predetermined alignment, said coupling further including clamp means for automatically clamping an attachment end when in said predetermined alignment; and

*EZ*  
*mt*

a horizontal-to-vertical transition fitting having walls including an arcuate [a] bottom wall [defining] , first and second side walls (100, 102) disposed on opposite sides of said bottom wall and a generally vertical rear wall opposing said bottom wall and joining said side walls;

said bottom, side and rear walls cooperating to define  
a cable pathway extending from a vertical pathway portion having an open vertical access (112) to a generally perpendicular horizontal pathway portion having an open horizontal access [(108)] on a side of said bottom wall opposite said vertical access;

a slot (116) formed through [a sidewall 103 of said fitting] said second sidewall and said bottom wall for passing a fiber exterior of said fitting from said horizontal pathway to said vertical pathway, said slot [extend] extending completely from said vertical access to said horizontal access.

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REMARKS

With respect to claim 1, Applicant amends the claim to more clearly indicate that the coupling of the present invention

includes inner walls which completely cover and shield the resilient springs from the interior cable pathway.

With respect to EP 315,023A (Swifts), no such coupling is shown or suggested (see, e.g., the coupling shown in Fig. 20). With respect to French 1,479,341 (Baut), the spring clip mechanism (for example, shown best in Figs. 3-8) does not include inner and outer walls defining enclosed pockets, with the spring received within the pocket and shielded from the interior. Instead, the spring 20 is completely exposed to the interior and retained only by tabs 13, 14. As a result, if a clip mechanism such as Baut were to be combined with the trough of Swifts, a plurality of springs would be exposed within the pathway at each coupling location. When routing fiber-optic cable or the like through such a pathway, the cable sheeting could catch and tear on the clip mechanisms. The amendments to claim 1 clearly recite the spring is covered and shielded from the interior.

Applicant respectfully submits that the structure of claim 1 distinguishes both structurally and functionally from the combination of the prior art. Structurally, claim 1 calls for a coupling having inner and outer walls defining a pocket which receives the walls of the cable pathway-defining elements and urges the pathway-defining elements against the wall and with the spring carried completely within the pocket defined between the first and second opposing walls. Further, claim 1 recites that the inner walls cooperate with the element walls to define a generally continuous closed wall between the pathway-defining

elements. The spring is covered and shielded from the interior. Such structure is not shown in either of the cited references or any combination. Further, such structure provides benefits not found in the cited references.

With respect to claim 8, Applicant has amended the claim to recite the various walls which define an enclosed cable pathway. The Examiner will note the pathway of Fig. 18 of Swifts is open. Also, claim 8 is amended to recite the access slot is formed in a sidewall and bottom wall. No such structure is shown in Swifts.

Applicant respectfully submits the claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and notice of allowance are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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